



Illinois American Water Encourages Customers to Refrain from Flushing Disinfection Wipes and Pouring Grease Down the Drain

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BELLEVILLE – With a shortage of toilet paper, many households are increasing their use of “flushable” wipes, but Illinois American Water warns against flushing these items down the toilet.

According to the Company, flushing baby wipes - even those that are labeled flushable or biodegradable - and paper towels down the toilet can lead to sewer backups and in-home plumbing issues. Vice President of Operations Beth Matthews said, “Many sewer blockages occur between the house or business and the utility’s sewer main, where the property owner is responsible for correcting the problem. We want to help our customers avoid blockages and a plumbing emergency.”

She added that flushing the wrong things down the drain can cause problems in the local sewer system. She said, “While it might seem to make your daily life easier, putting the wrong thing down the toilet or drain can and does cause blockages, which take time and money to fix.”

In addition to disinfection wipes, Illinois American Water also warns against pouring grease, fat or oil down the drain. When washed down the drain, grease and oil can adhere to the insides of the pipes that carry the wastewater from homes and businesses to the sewer treatment facility. Over time, this buildup of grease can restrict the flow of wastewater, or worse yet, block the homeowners’ or utility’s sewer pipes. These blockages can lead to sewage overflows or backups in homes and businesses.

It can also have an adverse effect on the environment if the overflow enters local rivers, lakes and streams.

Tips for homeowners include:

Allow grease to cool and use a rubber scraper to remove the fat, oil and grease from cookware, plates, utensils and cooking surfaces. Then place the grease in a sealed container and dispose of it in the trash.

Install baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and empty them into the trash.

Keep in mind, garbage disposals do not prevent grease from washing down the drain.

Also, detergents that claim to dissolve grease may pass it down the line and cause problems in other parts of the wastewater system.

More information and tips can be found online at illinoisamwater.com under Water Quality and Preventing Sewer Blockages. About Illinois American Water - Illinois American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor-owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and/or wastewater services to approximately 1.3 million people. American Water also operates a customer service center in Alton and a quality control and research laboratory in Belleville. With a history dating back to 1886, American Water is the largest and most geographically diverse U.S. publicly traded water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 6,800 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to 15 million people in 46 states. American Water provides safe, clean, affordable and reliable water services to our customers to make sure we keep their lives flowing. For more information, visit amwater.com and follow American Water on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.